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TALMAGE'S SERMON.

A Discourse On the Subject of Congregational Singing.

The Arguments For and Against It-The Influence of Church Music-The Methods, Past and Present-Precentors and Chotrs.

Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage took for the subject of a recent sermon delivered at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, "Congregational Singing," taking for his text:

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord.-[IL Chronicles, v, 11.]

The temple was done. It was the very chorus of all magnificence and pomp. Splendor crowded against splendor. It was the diamond necklace of the earth. From the huge pillars crowned with leaves of flowers and rows of pomegranate wrought out in burnished metal, down even to the tongs and snuffers made out of pure gold, every thing was as complete as the God-directed architect could make it. It seemed as if a vision from Heaven had slighted on the mountains. The day for dedication came. Tradition says that there were in and around about the temple on that day 200,000 silver trumpets, 40,000 harps, 40,000 timbrels and 200,000 singers; so that all modern demonstrations at Dusseldorf or Boston seem nothing compared with that. As this great sound-surged up smid the precious stones of the temple, it must have seemed like the River of Life dashing against the amethyst of the wall of heaven. The sound arose and God, as if to show that he was well pleased with the music which his children make in all ages, dropped into the midst of the temple a cloud of glory so overpowering that the officiating priests were obliged to stop in the midst of the services.

There has been much discussion as to where music was born. I think that at the beginning, when the morning stars sang together and all the suns of God shouted for joy, that the earth heard the echo. The cloud on which the angels stood to celebrate the creation was the birthplace of song. The stars that glitter at night are only so many keys of celestial pearl on which God's fingers play the music of the spheres. Inanimate nature is full of God's stringed and wind instruments. Silence Itself-perfect silence-is only a musical rest in God's great anthem of worship. Wind among the leaves, insect humming in the summer air, the rush of billow upon beach, the ocean far out sounding its everlasting psalm, the bobolink on the edge of the forest, the quall whistling up from the grass, are music. While visiting Blackwell's Island I heard coming from a window of the lunatic asylum a very sweet song. It was sung by one who had lost her reason, and I have come to believe that even the deranged and disordered elements of nature would make music to our ear if we only had acuteness enough to listen. I suppose that even the sounds in nature that are discordant and repulsive make harmony in God's ear. You know that you may come so near to an orchestra that the sounds are painful instead of pleasurable; and I think that we stand so near devastating storm and frightful whirlwind we can not hear that which makes to God's ear and the ear of the spirits above us a music as complete as it is

tremendous. The day of judgment, which will be a day of tumult and uproar, I suppose, will bring no dissonance to the ears who can calmly listen, although it will be as when some great performer, in executing a boisterous piece of music, he sometimes breaks down the instrument upon which he plays; so it may be on that last that the grand march of God, played by the fingers of thunder and earthquake and conflagration, may break down the world upon which the music is executed. Not only is inanimate nature full of music, but God has wonderfully organized the human voice, so that in the plainest throat and lungs there are fourteen direct muscles which can make over 16,000 different sounds! Now, there are thirty indirect muscles which can make, it has been estimated, more than 173,000,000 of sounds. Now, I say, when God has so constructed the human voice, and when he has filled the whole earth with harmony, and when He recognized it in the ancient temple, I have a right to come to the conclusion that God loves music.

I propose this morning to speak about sacred music, first showing you its importance and then stating some of the obstacles to its advancement.

I draw the first argument for the importance of sacred music from the fact that God commanded it. Through Paul He tells us to admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; through David He cries out; 'Sing ye to God all ye kingdoms of the earth." And there are hundreds of other passages I might name, proving that it is as much a man's duty to sing as it is to pray. Indeed I think there are more commands in the Bible to sing than there are to pray God not only asks for the human voice, but for the instruments of music. He asks for the cymbal, and the harp, and the trumpet. And I suppose that, in the last days of the church, the harp, the lute, the trumpet, and all the instruments of music that have given their chief aid to the theater and bacchanal, will be brought by their masters and laid down at the feet of Christ and then sounded in the church's triumph on her way from suffering into glory. "Praise ye the Lord!" Praise him with your voices. Praisehim with stainged

instruments and with organs. I draw another argument for the importance of this exercise from the impressiveness of the exercise. You know something of what secular music has achieved. You know it has made its impression upon governments, upon laws, upon literature, upon whole generations. One inspiriting National air is worth thirty thousand men as a standing army. There comes a time in the battle when one bugle is worth a thousand muskets. In the earlier part of the civil war the Government proposed to economize in bands of music, and many of them were sent home; but the Generals in the army sent word to Washington: "You are making a great mistake. We are fall-ing back and falling back. We have not enough music." Then the Government changed its mind; more bands of muvic were sent to the field, and the day of shameful defeat terminated. I have to tell you that no nation or church can afford to severely economize in music.

Many of you are illustrations of whas sacred song can do. Through it you were brought into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. You stood out against the warning and the argument of the pulpit, but when in the sweet words of Charles Wesley or John Newton or Toplady, the love of Jesus was sung to your soul, then you sur-rendeced, as an armed castle that could not be taken by a host, lifts its window to listen to a harp's trill.

There was a Scotch soldier dying in New Orleans and a Scotch minister came in to give him the consolations of the gospel. The man turned over on his pillow and said:

"Don't talk to me about religion." Then the Scotch minister began to sing a familiar hymn of Scotland that was composed by David Dickinson, beginning with

> O mother, dear Jerusa'em. When shall I come to thee?

He sung it to the tune of Dundee, and every body in Scotland knows that; and as he began to sing the dying soldier turned over on his pillow and said to the

"Where did you learn that?" "Why," replied the minister, "my moth-

er taught me that." "So did mine," said the dying Scotch soldier; and the very foundation of his heart was upturned, and then and there he yielded himself to Christ.

Oh, it is an irresistible power! Luther's ermons have been forgotten, but his "Judgment Hymn" sings on through the ages, and will keep on singing until the blast of the archangel's trumpet shall bring about that very day which the hymn celebrates. I would to God that those who hear me to-day would take these songs of salvation as messages from Heaven; for, just as certainly as the birds brought food to Elijah by the brook Cherith, so these winged harmonies, Godsent, are flying to your soul with the bread of life. Open your mouth and take it, O hungry Elijah!

But I must now speak of some of the obstactes in the way of the advancement of this sacred music; and the first is, that it has been impressed into the service of superstition. I am far from believing that music ought always to be positively religious. Refined art has opened place where music has been secularized and The drawing-room, the musical club, the orohestra, the concert, by the gratification of pure taste and the production of harmless amusement and the improvement of talent, have become very forces in the advancement of our civilization. Music has as much right to laugh in Surrey Gardens as it has to pray in St. Paul's. In the kingdom of nature we have the glad fling of the wind as well as the long-meter psalm of the thunder. But while all this is so, every observer has noticed that this art, which God intended for the improvement of the ear and the voice and the head and the heart, has often been impressed into the service of error. Tartini, the musical composer, dreamed one night that Satan snatched from his hand an instrument and played upon it something very sweet-a dream that has often been fulfilled in our day, the voice and the instruments, that ought to have been devoted to Christ, captured from the Church and applied to purposes of sin.

Another obstacle has been an inordinate fear of criticism. The vast majority of people singing in church never want anybody else to hear them sing. Everybody is waiting for somebody else to do his duty. If we all sang, then the inaccuracies that are evident when only a few sing would be drowned out. God asks you to do as well as you cart, and then, if you get the wrong pitch or keep wrong time, he will forgive any deficiency of the ear and imperfection of the voice. Angels will not laugh if you should lose your place in the musi-cal scale, or come in at the close bar behind. There are three schools of singing, I am told-the German school, the Italian school and the French school of singing. Now, I would like to add a fouth school, and that is the school of Christ. The voice of a contrite, broken heart, although it may not be able to stand human criticism, makes better music to God's ear than the most artistic performance when the heart is wanting. I know it is easier to preach on this than it is to practice; but I sing for two reasons: First, because I like it, and next, because I want to encourage those who do not know how. I have but very little faculty in that direction and no culture at all, yet I am resolved to sing though every note should go off like a Chinese gong. has commanded it and I dare not be silent. He calls on the beasts, on the cattle, on the dragons, to praise him, and we ought not to be behind the cattle and the drag-

Another obstacle that has been in the way of the advancement of this boly art has been so much angry discussion on the subject of music. There are those who would have this exercise conducted by musical instruments. In the same church there are those who do not like musical instruments, and so it is organ and no organ, and there is a fight. In another church it is a question whether the music shall be conducted by a precentor or by a drilled choir. Some want a drilled choir and some want a precentor, and there is a fight. Then there are those who would like in the church to have the organ played in a dull, lifeless dron-ing way, while there are oth-ers who would have it wreathed into fantastics, branching out into jets and spangles of sound, rolling and tossing in marvelous convolutions, as when in pyrotechnic display you think a piece is exhausted it breaks out in wheels, rockets blue lights and serpentine demonstrations. Some would have the organ played in almost inaudible sweetness, and others would have it full of staccato passages that make the audience jump with great eyes and hair on end as though by a vision of the witch of Endor, and he who tries to please all will succeed in nothing. Nevertheless, you are to admit the fact that the contest which is going on in hundreds of churches of the United States today is a mighty hinderance to the advancement of this art. In this way scores and scores of churches are entirely crip-pled as to all influence, and the music is a damage rather than a praise.

Another obstacle in the advancement of this art has been the erroneous notion that this part of the service could be conducted by a delegation. Churches have

"Oh, what an easy time we shall have. The minister will do the preaching and the choir will do the singing, and we will have nothing to do."

And you know as well as I that there are great multitude of churches all through this land where the people are not expected to sing. The whole work is done by a delegation of four or six or ten persons and the audience are silent. In such a church in Syracuse an old elder persisted in such singing, and so the choir appointed a committee to go and ask the 'squire if he would not stop. You know that in a great multitude of churches the choir are expected, and do, all the singing and the great mass of peo-ple are expected to be silent, and if you utter your voice you are interfering. There they stand, the four, with opera glass dangling at their side singing, "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me," with the same spirit that the night before on the stage they took their part in the "Grand Duchess" or "Don Giovanni."

Now, in this church, we have resolved upon the plan of conducting the music by a precentor. We do it for two reasons: one is that by throwing the whole responsibility upon the mass of the people, making the great multitude the choir, we might rouse more heartiness. The congregation coming on the Sabbath day feel that they can not delegate this part of the great service to any one else, and so they themselves assume it. We have glorious congregational singing here. People have come many miles to hear it. They are not sure about the preaching, but they can always depend on the singing. We have heard the sound coming up like "the voice of many waters," but it will be done at a better rate after a while, when we shall realize the neight and the depth and the immensity of this privilege.

Another reason why we adopted this plan: We do not want any choir quarrels. You know very well that in scores of the churches there has been perpetual conten-tion in that direction. The only church fight that ever occurred under my ministry was over a melodeon in my first settlement. Have you never been in church en the Sabbath day and heard the choir sing and you said: "That is splendid music? The next Sabbath you were in the church and there was no choir at all. Why? The leader was mad or his assistants were mad, or they were mad altogether. Some of the choirs are made up of our best Christian people! Some of the warmest friends I have ever had have stood up in them, Sabbath after Sabbath, conscientionsly and successfully leading the praises of God. But the majority of choirs throughout the land are not made up of Christian people, and three-fourths of the church fights originate in the organ-loft. I take that back and say nine-tenths. Many of our churches are dying of choirs

Let us, as a church, give still more attention to the music. If a man with voice enough to sing keep silent during the exercise he commits a crime against God and

insults the Almighty. There will be a great revolution on this subjects in all our churches. God will come down by his spirit and rouse up the old hymns and tunes that have not been more than half awake since the time of our grandfathers. The silent pews in the church will break forth into music, and when the conductor takes his place on the Sabbath day there will be a great hest of voices rushing into the harmony. My Christian friends, if we have no taste for this service on earth, what will we do in Heaven, where they all sing and sing forever? Let me prophesy in regard to any here who has no delight in the worship of Heaven, if you do not sing the praises of God on earth I do not believe you will ever sing them in glory. I would that our sing-ing to-day might be like the Saturday night rehearsal for the Sabbath morning in the skies, and might begin now by the strength and by the help of God, to discharge a duty which none of us have fully

Let those refuse to sing Who never knew our God; But children of the Heavenly King Should speak their joys abroad.

A thousand sacred sweets, Before we reach the Heavenly fields, Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,

And every tear be dry; We're marching through Emanuel's ground To fairer worlds on high.

Come, now, clear your throats and get ready for this duty or you will never hear the end of this. I never shall forget hearing a Frenchman singing the Marseillaise hymn on the Champ Elysees, Paris, just before the battle of Sedan. I never saw such enthusiasm before or since as he sang that National air. Oh, how the Frenchman shouted! Have you ever in an Engligh assemblage heard a band play "God Save the Queen." If you have you know something about the enthusiasm of a national air. Now, I tell you that these songs we sing Sabbath by Sabbath are the national airs of Jesus Christ and of the kingdom of Heaven. When Cronwell's army went into battle, he stood at the head of them one day and gave out the long meter doxology to the tune of "Old Hundred," and that great host, company by company, regiment by regiment, battalion by battalion, joined in the dox-

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye Heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

And while they sang they marched, and while they marched they fought, and while they fought they got the victory Oh men and women of Jesus Christ, let us go into our conflicts singing the praises of God, and then, instead of falling back, as we often do, from defeat to defeat, we will be marching on from victory to

-A writer in Nature gives an in-stance of remarkable adaptation in elephants. He observed a young one go to a fence and pull out a bamboo stick, which he broke in pieces, but he threw all the pieces away. This he re-peated till he found a piece that suited him. This he passed under his armpit and began to scratch. Down fell a great elephant leech, six inches long, and that without a scraper could not have been dislodged. The writer adds that the custom is an established one among elephants. They will also break off bushes, strip them neatly down, and use them to whip away

—A Waterbury gentleman was sur-prised while out for a drive on the Wolcott road recently by the conduct of a boy whom he asked to ride. The boy refused obstinately, and when prevailed upon for a reason said he expected a whipping when he got home and was in no hurry.—Waterbury (Conn.) American.

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than 20c wholesale. 5,000 yards Cream Momie Cloth, 64c a yard; never sold less than

10,000 yards Swiss Satin Checks and Stripes, 16c; never sold for ess than 35c.

3. 000yards of Pin Check Nainsook, 22c a yard; never less than 35c. We have not the space to enumerate the number of bargains we have in these goods. All we can say is this: we have now on sale

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